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CHARLES
HOWARD
KEGLEY

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GIFT OF
Charles Howard Tegley

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Charles Howard Kegley

2107 H. C. Kegley

Gift of

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CALIFORNIA

THE PROGRESS, PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS, POMONA, CAL.

DEDICATED TO MY WIFE

PHOEBE EMERSON KEGLEY

AND MY FATHER

JOHN JENNINGS KEGLEY

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PS 3521
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1915
MAIN

MOTHER OF THE TENEMENT

WORN by long hours of toil and child-care,
She lay, asleep. Her trouble-furrowed brow
At last was calm. No trace of woe was there;
From restlessness she'd freed herself, somehow.
The intonation made by shunted cars
At elevated switches, shook the walls.
The ribald songs of men at rowdy bars
Were echoed and re-echoed through the halls.
The noisy clang of the police patrol,
The hoarse horn hoots of spectral harbor boats,
Did not disturb the peace that held her soul.
Deaf-eared was she to all discordant notes.

The shrill voice of the midnight paper boy,
The church clock, striking twelve, in vibrant dome,
Met failure if their wish was to annoy
The strength-spent sleeper in her humble home.
Quite undisturbed she slumbered on and on;
The night grew old, the noises did not die;
Amid the clangor of approaching dawn
An infant breathed a faint, but troubled sigh.
Whereat the woman rose and softly crept
Across the room. There, in the gloom, unseen,
She lingered where her dimpled baby slept,
To know just what that little sigh could mean!

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JUST WHEN—

NOW'DAYS when some "pinch hitter" knocks
the ball
Far into yonder field outside the park,
And loses it so thoroughly that all
The "pig tail" boys can't find it before dark,
My thoughts return to dreams of "clean-up" men—
To when, at school, we boys played One Old Cat.
Each recess, teacher rang the bell just when
I'd caught three strikes and earned my turn at bat.

Throughout the school's long, tedious study hours
I conned my books with heavy, tired eyes,
Unmindful of sweet woodland's leafy bowers,
Of rippling rivulets and turquoise skies.
I laid aside my books with hopes that when
Recess came I would star at One Old Cat,
But always, teacher rang the bell just when
I'd caught three strikes and earned a turn at bat.

Oh, boys, who Home-Run Bakers fain would be,
And you who'd be a Wagner or a Cobb—
If you now know the thing which saddened me
In boyhood, come and lean on me to sob.
Ah, how I sympathize with little men
Who, when at school, go in for One Old Cat!
For I know the teacher rings the bell just when
They've caught three strikes and earned a turn at bat!

FARM ENGINEERING

BY some durn fool scheme of tilin'
John has dreaned the pesky slough
In the medder. Now he's spilin'
Fer some other trick tu do.
Drat his picter! Him'n Lizzie
Al'ays has their elbows bent.
All last winter John was busy
Makin' fence posts of se-ment.

Slack times, Lizzie she's a-helpin'
John a right smart now and then,
Spec'ly if the kids ain't yelpin'
But when they need tendin', then
John's gas en-jin does the washin'
An' dinged if the thing don't churn,
Way John farms is sure a caution;
W'y them folks has gas to burn!

John has got a patent dingus
Tu divide the milk and cream,
An' he's built a konkreet thingus
Filled with some durn fodder scheme
Fer tu feed the dratted cattle
Tu increase their milk supply.
He says half the farmin' battle
Is the what, the when and why.

Has a rig for strainin' honey;
Railroad en-jins hitched tu plows,
Just got through a-spendin' money
Fer machines to suck the cows.
Bought an auto, Liz is steerin'—
Speck she'll run it in a ditch,
But they're both farm engineerin'
An' I guess they're gettin' rich!

ANYHOW

VERBENA SMAY and Buddie Snooks
Became betrothed one summer day,
They both had read in recent books
About the new eugenic way
Of marrying, and so they thought
That ere they became groom and bride,
In justice to the world they ought
To stand tests and be certified.

Bud Snooks was broad across the back;
His lungs were strong, his breath was sweet;
But when the doctor watched his track
He turned him down on flattened feet.
Verbena went before the board
Of health and, 'tis the gospel truth,
Too low to be a bride, she scored,
For she had but one wisdom tooth.

Verbena squalled at home all day;
Bud's chin hung down upon his chest;
The neighbors all came in to say
That what transpired was for the best.
It didn't turn out as we hoped,
But then all hands are happy now,
Because that night the pair eloped
And had their wedding, anyhow!

THE HAPPY CHAIR

BY them, 'tis called the Happy Chair.
For two, there's room, with space to spare.
Deep in its leathered depths, enshrined,
Is all that they may hope to find
This side of Heaven—faith renewed,
Life from a saner angle viewed,
Peace for the sorely-troubled heart,
Strength to the better play their part.

Deep in the depths of Happy Chair
They often sink, a grief to share,
With purpose earnest and sincere,
Exchanging kiss or drying tear.
Heart throbs to tune the other heart,
And makes their love a thing apart
From all else; undefiled, complete;
While paths grow softer to their feet.

Strong as the law of any king,
Their chair-shrine stands for just one thing—
Calm state of mind, to silence fear
Whene'er black clouds of doubt appear.
Each sign of discord takes them to
The Happy Chair, where they renew,
Soft-voiced, the love which, they agree,
Has always been, and e'er shall be.

IF THE FARMER DOES NOT PROSPER

WHENE'ER the farmer goes to town to sell a load of oats,
Or market sixteen bags of beans, or ship a bunch of shoats,
The business men along the street are sure to treat him well.
They ask him what he sold, and how much more he has to sell;
They find out how much seed it took to sow a certain field,
And they inquire about the prospects for a bumper yield.
They're always happy when the farmer's raising thrifty flocks,
For if he does not prosper business soon goes on the rocks.

Whene'er the weather man says that there'll be no frost at night
The business men along the street all chuckle with delight,
Because they know that ears of corn increase in size and weight
Each time the weather man reports that Old Jack Frost is late.
The business men along the street are glad when pumpkins thrive

Down on the farm, for pumpkins keep the canning plant alive.
At times when farmers prosper business men can sell their stocks,
But when the crops fail business mighty soon goes on the rocks.

The farmer can't get rich too quick to suit the city folk.
Whene'er the farmer sells his steers he buys his wife a cloak,
And if he gets a good price for his corn and oats and hay
He buys a railroad ticket and goes out west to stay
All winter, and a portion of the money then is paid
To section men for laying track and building railroad grade.
The section men, of course, then go down-town and buy some socks,
But if the farmer doesn't prosper business hits the rocks.

RED POP OR RYE?

HE blew into Roundup with spats
On, and one of those rah, rah, rah! hats;
He wore a bow tie,
Had a glass in his eye;
And a b'iled shirt covered his slats.
The boys saw him coming that day,
And Candy Jones shouted: "Hooray!
We'll now have some fun
There's a son-of-a-gun
Of a tenderfoot headed this way!"

The stranger, of course, had to stop,
For a drink at McKee's liquor shop,
And when Billy McKee
Said: "What'll it be?"
The answer was: "Red sody pop!"
That started things, right then and there.
Candy Jones vaulted out of his chair,
And said: "No, me b'y;
While you're here, gargle rye;
You farmer with lard on your hair!"

The stranger was pale-faced and slight;
He wore no blue hardware in sight.
It was quite plain to me,
And to Billy McKee,
That he wasn't in for a fight.

Candy Jones was so sure he had found
Some one he could bully around,
That he backed up his bluff
With a gun big enough
To bore big post-holes in the ground.

On the bar set the pop and the booze;
Which one would the tenderfoot choose?
Candy upset the pop,
And shouted: "You wop;
Down that rye! Don't you dare to refuse!"
From somewhere the stranger then drew
A Mauser not pleasant to view,
And, Jones being off guard,
He murmured: "Now, pard,
I'll set up the sody to you!"

After Jones downed the sody, he swore,
And ducked through the thirst-parlor door.
As he bought a cigar
And a drink at the bar,
The tenderfoot spat on the floor.
Walking out, with a smile on his face,
That galoot left his gun in the place.
Quoth McKee then: "Aw, hell!"
For there wasn't a shell
In the gun. 'Twas as empty as space!

THE STORY OF THE SLEEPER

NOW I lay me down to sleep.
There is a fellow counting sheep
In a berth across the aisle.
I hear him every little while.

I'm too long for a sleeper berth,
I really don't know where on earth
I'm ever going to put my feet,
For they won't stay beneath the sheet.

The sheet seems only napkin-size,
And as I lay here, angle-wise,
My legs stick out a yard. My toes
Are numb, I guess they're nearly froze.

I wonder why we stopped just now?
Perhaps we ran across a cow.
I hope the girl in upper ten
Won't start that awful snore again.

A gentle voice in lower four
Just now said: "Porter, close the door.
There is a big draft in this car—
Can't you feel it from where you are?"

The porter turned and shook his head.
"No, I don't feel a draft," he said.
He'd find it easy if he'd look
In one side of my pocketbook.

That couple just made man and wife
You'd think were married all their life.
"Have you the grip?" inquired the bride.
"No; just a cold," the husband sighed.

Just now I'm lying on my side,
But when the train goes 'round a wide
Curve somewhere down along the track
'Twill turn me over on my back.

The name of this car is "Wahslumm";
At least that's what it's called by some.
That isn't what I called it, though,
When I bumped my head a while ago.

The porter came and took my shoes,
But they're so big he couldn't use
Them in his business, so he brought
Them back again. Oh, happy thought!

The trainman, much to my surprise,
Just flashed his lantern in my eyes.
He had me autograph my name
Upon my ticket. Such is fame!

The other folks are all asleep,
And through the aisle dark shadows creep.
The porter has turned out the light,
And, the sandman's here, at last. Good night.

TRANSPLANTED

A STRANGER stopped in a country town.
He looked the main street up and down,
Then he said to himself: "I see a chance;
The property here will soon advance.
A good shop in this town would pay—
I'll buy one and get rich, some day."
He asked the butcher what he'd take
For his place, as the butcher sold a steak.

"I'll sell blamed cheap," the butcher said.
"This town, for ages, has been dead;
For months I haven't made a cent;
My profit I pay out for rent.
I'm losing money selling steer,
And gladly I'd depart from here.
Hand over fifty plunks to me,
Put on my coat and take the key."

The stranger bought the shop, I'm told,
And therein made a pot of gold.
The old shop-keeper moved away,
And he is getting rich today
In another town. The pelf
Oft comes when man transplants himself.
Are you the man who stands within,
Or are you outside, just looking in?

NEIGHBORS

WHEN we were living in a flat
We had our woes, I'll tell you that.
Once when our neighbor beat his wife
She slashed him with a butcher knife,
And when the fight broke up, of course,
She promptly sued for a divorce.
'Twas not a pleasant place to stay,
So we packed up and moved away.

We bought a house in Chestnut Square,
But pshaw, we didn't like it there.
One neighbor had a phonograph;
Another kept a yearling calf
That pranced around the yard and drank
The gas out of our auto tank.
When next we nailed our carpets down,
'Twas in another part of town.

Oh, now perhaps we were not mad
When we found out that twins they had
Across the way! With all their might
Those youngsters whooped it up each night.
Next day a tragic thing occurred—
Their tom cat came and ate our bird,
And so we stored our household goods
And pitched our tent out in the woods.

We'd rent a house in case we could
Find one in some good neighborhood,
But it seems impossible to find
A set of neighbors who are kind.
And howe'er kindly you may act
They don't appreciate the fact.
A man told me the other day
That he was glad we moved away.

THE PLEA OF A PATRON

WHEN I want to see the pictures, I put on my hat and go
Downtown to some place where I think they have a high-class show.
Then I buy a ticket, and I step inside the door and stand
There on the soft green carpet, with my skypiece in my hand,
Until an usher comes, to guide my unfamiliar feet
Down long, dark aisles, and lead me somewhere to a vacant seat;
But ere I start to follow him, I loudly do implore
Him not to seat me near those who have seen the films before.

How often, oh, how often I have gazed upon a reel
Of pictures that gave me the sort of thrills I like to feel,
And grown much interested in the progress of the play,
Only to have some thoughtless person, sitting near me, say,

Addressing a companion: "Oh, I know what's coming now:
The fast express speeds by and kills the farmer's Jersey cow.
The farmer claims the cow was worth a fortune, and he gets
Enough out of the railroad to pay off all his debts!"

Whenever some one near me gives the picture plot away,
I promptly lose all interest and can't enjoy the play.
For when the plot's unraveled, and I know what it's about,
I feel as though I've seen it all—for me the show is out.
And so, each time I go to see a picture show I say:
"Now, usher, put me where there are no big hats in the way!
And, usher, gentle usher, listen to me, I implore;
Please do not seat me near those who have seen the show before!"

A VOW

"WITH all my worldly goods I thee endow."
One bridegroom said, and guaranteed his vow
With wondrous wealth, but it did not express
Itself in words that gave her happiness.
Although each heap of gold was fine and pure,
That they lived happily, I'm not quite sure.

"With all my worldly goods I thee endow,"
Said one who did not even own a cow,
Nor had he steady work, but he was brave,
And she knew how to manage and to save.
His arms were brawny, and their hearts were pure;
That they lived happily, you may be sure!

THE TURNING POINT

HE was full of crazy notions. I once saw him point a gun
At a man and then declare it wasn't loaded, just for fun.
I had seen him light his pipe while seated on a powder keg;
He slept upon a railroad track one day and lost a leg.
He had done enough fool things to prove that he was short on brain,
So us townfolks got together and had him declared insane.

We were all down at the depot when they hustled him away,
And it happened that I took a short ride on the train that day.
I noted his behavior, and I heard the things he said,
Feeling sure that, of all men, he was the queerest in the head,
But I changed my mind about him, as I sat there on the plush,
His keeper wrote and mailed a letter marked: "Important! Rush!"

THE HORN OF PLENTY

THERE'S a glory in the autumn that the summer does not hold,
There is beauty in the forest leaf that turns from green to gold,
There is gladness in the thicket where the chipmunks are at play,
But there is no sweeter sound borne on the air, throughout the day,
Than the sound that floats up from the rustling fields of golden corn,
When the big ears hit the bang-board, on a frosty autumn morn.

The hired man gets up at four, and eke is on his way
Out to the distant field while yet the eastern sky is gray,
And ere the sun is high enough to warm the chilly air,
The husker has the golden ears heaped up to the point where
They show above the wagon bed and promise him that soon
He'll have as big a load as he can shovel off at noon.

The farmer views his bursting cribs with wonder-widened eye,
Because he knows of comforts that the golden loads will buy.
He dreams of oil tractors, when he goes to bed at night;
His wife dreams of a gas plant that will furnish heat and light;
His daughter dreams of autos that she hopes to learn to steer;
While his son has visions of the college he'll attend next year.

The autumn's full of glory. There is gladness in the air;
The corn cribs tell us that they have enough and some to spare.
The Horn of Plenty makes the sweetest sound that strikes the ear.
Its songs about Prosperity are what we like to hear,
So we listen to its music, while the farmer, husking corn,
Slams the ears against the bang-board, on a frosty autumn morn!

THE LURE

I LEANED upon her gate and sang
A song of great devotion,
Until the starry welkin rang
With my pent-up emotion.
"'Till comes the icy hand of death,
I'd like to have you near me,"
I sang, but 'twas a waste of breath.
She didn't seem to hear me.

Beneath her window then I sat,
Within an ivied bower.
With love-songs I informed her that
It was a witching hour;
And then I sang with all my might,
To make her coming certain.
Whereat she rose, put out her light,
And then pulled down the curtain.

My serenading ended there,
For my poor heart was bleeding.
Along the darkened thoroughfare
A big machine came speeding.
It turned and paused before her gate.
Three honks beat all my trying;
The fellow hadn't long to wait,
For she came out a-flying!

UNTIL

AND in the flurry he who once controlled
The world's supply and fixed the price of Wheat,
Was caught and shorn of all his cherished gold.
Head-bowed with grief, he blindly left the Street
And sought Fifth Avenue. No splendid car
Whirled him toward home. He made his way as one
Into whose heart defeat had seared its scar,
For as a power in Finance he was done.

The newsboys cried his downfall, penny-glad.
He climbed some steps, as though led to his doom,
Then with the little strength that he still had,
He raised a latch, and sought a drawing-room.
A woman sat there, gazing at the fire;
A sob was in the voice he tried to find;
As though that end had been her long desire,
She said: "I know it all, dear. Never mind."

The blood came, where he bit his lips. Said he:
"This home is yours. I lost all that I had."
She raised her eyes and sighed: "It seems to me
That Home and what is here might make you glad."
Impelled by love, two fine arms found their way
Around his neck, and this her sweet lips told:
"My dear, until you met defeat today,
To me all things were lost except your gold!"

THE IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE

MAN wants but little here below,
And yet, he'll walk through sleet or snow,
Or face a dust storm, or a gale,
That he may call to get his mail.

He'll walk a mile through driving rain,
To call for mail,—and home again;
He'll stand in line for half a day,
Then, empty-handed, turn away.

Man wants his mail, in calm or storm;
In weather cold or wet or warm.
A pity 'tis, he knows no better—
We, who so seldom get a letter!

CONTENTMENT

WHILE others hurry through the crowd
That each day throngs the busy street,
And auto horns are honking loud,
In other pathways stray his feet.
He wanders through the wooded glen,
And loafs a while beside the rills.
He does not care to stay where men
And women go the pace that kills.

While high-toned singers vocalize
In thronged halls filled with stifling air,
He wanders 'neath the azure skies,
And gives the merry laugh to care.
He hears the linnet sing a song,
And listens to the purling brook;
He finds, the while he fares along,
Contentment in each shaded nook.

While others cheer the statesman who
Makes promises he cannot keep,
The nature lover throws a few
Sticks on the fire and goes to sleep
Out in the open where the night-
Bird has a bedtime tale to tell.
He manages, by living right,
To keep his body strong and well.

For him no daily round of strife;
He likes the quiet haunts the best.
Therein he leads the simple life,
And finds a world of peace and rest.
He envies not those who are rich,
He has no lodge, no club, no church,
But he possesses that for which
The most of us are still in search.

THE GREATEST SOURCE OF JOY

THERE'S rejoicing in the household when the
nurse announces twins,
There is tumult in the bleachers every time the
home team wins,
There is gladness when a dividend is paid on doubtful
shares,
And we all laugh up our shirt sleeves when conductors
miss our fares.

When we are sick we're joyous if the boss don't dock
our pay;
Our cup is full whene'er we get "comp" tickets to
the play;
But none of those sensations equals that which fills
our chest
When we find a battered dollar in an old, discarded
vest!

JONES promises me that, if I will
Of good, pure water drink my fill,
My ills will vanish in a day,
And that, in a short time I'll weigh
A great deal more. I'll not be thin,
And I will have a rosy skin.
Jones drinks a lot of Adam's ale,
And yet he's very thin and pale.

Brown hits me a resounding whack,
And says: "Come, throw your shoulders back.
If you will practice breathing deep
You'll soon get so that you can sleep.
Fresh air will make you want to eat,
And food will put you on your feet."
But, while that little speech he made,
Brown roosted on one shoulder blade.

Smith says: "I'll tell you what to do.
Of hearty meals eat only two
Each day. Just let your stomach rest
A little, and you'll feel the best
You've ever felt. That hunch is pat.
Take my advice, and you'll get fat."
Smith always has been hollow-eyed,
And he don't dare to eat things fried.

THE WONDER WORLD

I SAW a youngster standing beside his mother's knee;
He was playing with a top, and was as happy as could be;
He had on knee-length trousers, his little feet were bare,
But when, ten minutes later, I saw him standing there,
His mother had grown older: she was worn, and she was gray;
And he was tall and twenty, so to school he went away.

I saw him enter college, and could not suppress a laugh,
For he graduated there in just three minutes and a half.
Two minutes later he had worked five long years of his life;
In one more second he had won a rich girl for a wife.
Three seconds passed, and their first son was seventeen years old,
And in less than half a second their old homestead had been sold.

I tarried in a strange world, where time was very fleet,
And life was short, but none the less enjoyable and sweet.
There creeping infants lived long lives in a quarter of an hour,
And in a jiffy men acquired influence and power.
But none of these things happened in reality, you know—
I saw them in that wonder-world—the Motion Picture Show.

A QUIET RETREAT

I KNOW a quiet little place
To color up your cheeks.
You might not see a human face
Up there for weeks and weeks.
There are no bum cafes up there;
Your clothes need not be pressed,
And you can loll beneath the trees,
And sniff the bracing summer breeze,
And rest, and rest, and rest.

Up there a little brooklet flows
Down through the fragrant wood,
And every time a fellow goes
Near it, it does him good.
There are no roaring torrents there,
Nor rapids, bends or curves.
The placid streamlet glides along
And lisps a little sylvan song
That rests your tired nerves.

Oh, you could stand beside that brook
For days and days and days,
And cast a nicely baited hook
Nine hundred different ways,
But you could not catch fish up there,
Because none there abide.
Last year it was so quiet they
Got lonesome. They all went away,
But one, and that one died.

THE WISE MAN AND THE FOOL

THE April rain came drizzling down. A score of men were seated
Within the corner grocery, where the atmosphere was heated
By many a hot and fierce debate, for you must realize
That of this score in argument each man was wondrous wise.

Affairs of State and Nation by these men were put aside
Quite suddenly, however, when they saw a fellow ride
Down through the street astride a tall and homely sorrel mule.
"Ho! Ho!" cried Wise Man Number One, "here comes the Village Fool!"

The Wise Man then went on to tell of things that had been said
About this callow youth who had such emptiness of head,
And then explained that he would try a time-worn trick of his.
"I'll play it just to show," said he, "how ignorant he is."

In came the Fool. Quite tall was he in height, and rather spare.
His look was wan, his face was blank, save for a vacant stare.
I knew at once I might expect to witness something strange,
When Wise Man Number One drew forth a small handful of change.

Then stretching forth his hand which held a dollar and a dime,
He said: "Thou Fool, two coins are here. Which do you choose this time?"
The Fool's face lighted with a smile quite innocent and bland,
And then he clasped the ten cent piece within a grimy hand.

The Wise Men all burst forth with peals of laughter loud and long,
And I myself was quite amused because the Fool was wrong.
My astonishment was greater though when Wise Man Number One
Explained that he had often played the trick he had just done.

He told me he had played the trick at least a hundred
times,
And instead of choosing dollars that the Fool had
chosen dimes,
"And so you see," said Wise Man Number One, with
smiling phiz,
"Just what a blooming Simpleton and Empty Head
he is."

I marveled at it all and when the Wise Men went
their way
I touched the Fool upon the arm, requesting him to
stay.
"Oh! Fool," I asked, "whene'er you choose why don't
you take the greater?"
To which the Fool made this reply to me a second
later:

"I take the dimes in preference to dollars as a
rule,
For if I knew the difference I'd no longer be a
Fool."
Then a wallet filled with silver he drew forth that I
might see,
And it told a different story than the Wise Man told
to me.

VACATION TIME

THERE'S a heap of preparation
Going on all o'er the nation;
There's to be a separation
In the family, I fear.
I have one sure way of knowing—
All the woman folk are sewing
Clothes they'll wear where they are going
In vacation time of year.

To the lakes go Jane and Nora;
To the mountains May and Flora;
Mother visits in Panora
Every summer, and I hear
That the boys are going touring.
Just at present they're procuring
Things they think that they'll need during
The vacation time of year.

Yes, there's surely preparation
Going on all o'er the nation;
There's to be a separation
In the family, I fear.
Suits for Maintenance have started;
Father's almost broken-hearted.
From his money he'll be parted
In vacation time of year.

IMPRESSIONS

I THOUGHT her very homely when she came to me and stood
Smiling in her girlish manner, from beneath a kitty hood.
And I clung to that decision when we met at pasture bars;
I stuck to that decision when we strolled beneath the stars.
I thought her nose was tilted up a trifle farther than
It ought to be to have her just exactly suit a man.

Her face was brown with freckles, and I thought they marred her looks.
At any rate she wasn't like the girls I saw in books.
I didn't like her eyebrows nor the color of her hair;
Her hands were short, but otherwise a very pretty pair.
I really don't know what attracted me to her, but she,
After quite a long acquaintance, grew more likeable to me.

Sometimes we wandered far afield on sunny summer days,
Sometimes we took a ride behind a handsome team of bays.
Then she was near me often, and I liked to have her there,
For a pretty touch of autumn lighted up her eyes and hair.
I remember my last vision of her too-much-tilted nose—
'Twas the night I said I loved her, and she cuddled to me close.

The day that we were married, not a freckle was in sight.
Her looks have since improved till now she seems exactly right.
When baby came, this morning, Doc exclaimed, in glad surprise:
"Seems to be most like his mother, for he has her nose and eyes;"
After which he stood a moment, noting that I'm bald up there,
Then he said: "But say! I guess the Kid has got his Daddy's hair!"

THE KICKER

I MET him in the road one day,
And this is what he had to say:
"My corn is only half a stand,
And it is all on bottom land.
In case my fields should overflow,
You know where my corn crop would go."
The rains that spring were very light.
They didn't hurt his crop a mite.

Again we chatted while he hoed
Spuds in a patch beside the road.
Said he: "The weather is too warm.
I fear the heat will bring a storm.
Unless we get cool nights I fear
The oats crop will be light this year."
That fall, when he threshed, he sold oats
Enough to pay off all his notes.

When next we met he said: "My friend,
Pray tell me when this drouth will end.
My ground is parched, my crops are sick;
They must have rain and have it quick."
That night there came a heavy rain
Which saved his crops of hay and grain,
But he was displeased, for he found
That three young chickens had been drowned.

I used to heed the kicker's wail,
But now I dodge his woeful wail,
I have no time to waste with those
Who stop and lean upon their hoes
To tell me things are going wrong.
I talk with men who sing a song
The while they till their fertile fields
And prophesy enormous yields!

THE BALM OF THE BLEACHERS

WHENEVER life seems dull and dark
We go out to the baseball park
And sit upon the bleachers,
Among the doctors and the clerks,
The bosses of the public works,
The painters and the preachers.
And there, from vantage point on high,
We watch the batter knock the fly
Into the distant garden,
And then we smash a dozen hats,
And if we kick men in the slats
We do not beg their pardon.

Whene'er the pitcher throws an "in"
And hits a batter on the shin
We're very much delighted,
And if they do not lynch the "ump"
For being such a blooming "chump,"
We think that we've been slighted.
We gaze upon a three-base hit,
Then throw a neat conniption fit,
And when another daisy
Goes sailing o'er some distant cloud
We throw our hats and yell so loud
The world thinks we are crazy.

Oh, bless the men who play baseball.
They furnish tonic for us all;
They make our life-blood tingle.
When expert pitchers grace the box
It tickles us if some man knocks
A modest little single.
And if a batter hits a fly
That sails far up into the sky,
We sing and shout and bellow.
When life seems commonplace and tame,
Go out and see a baseball game!
It's good for any fellow!

INTROSPECTION

I KEEP the family album clus beside me, here uv late.
Them surgeons frum the city hez bin out here, and they state
That a cattyrack is growin' on each one uv my eyes.
They seem like real nice fellers; they're accounted pretty wise;
They allow my eyes is just about as bad as they kin be,
Yet they think a little cuttin' would fix them so I could see
Good as new. But operations cost an awful lot, they say,
And we're just too pesky poor to have them cut the things away!

Yes, since them doctor chaps was out, I've kept the album near.
You may not understand it, but I been a-feelin' queer
Here lately, and a-runnin' through the album, fer I know
It ain't a-goin' to be a great while till my sight'll go.
I get a deal uv comfert, sittin' in the willer chair,

With the old plush-covered album opened up at the place where
We had a family picter down on one of Sheldon's farms,
And Pap was standin' up, a-holdin' Hattie in his arms.

That's Nettie in the center. On that strand uv beaded string
'Round her neck, there, she's a-wearin' her Aunt Lib's engagement ring.
Before Lib died she give the ring to our gal, fer she said
'Twould help the gal remember her long after she was dead.
Agin our gal growed up she had a finger it'ud fit,
And so, one night, she put it on, and got engaged with it.
Her gal—the one I'm keepin'—wears it now, because you know
Her mother couldn't take it with her when she had to go.

That's John, a-standin' by his Dad. He wore sich purty curls
When we had this picter taken that he looked jist like the girls.

The years have made a great change in our John. Why, I declare,
His head hez grown so bald, uv late, that he ain't ary hair.
Hat—she looks so tall and skinny in her picter that today
I don't allow you'd know her. Let me see—what does she weigh?
Well, I don't recall, just now, but seems to me one day I guessed,
And at that her man spoke up and said: "She weighs two hundred dressed!"

Em disagreed with Pap, once. Then she took her clothes and went
Away. They say her husband is a railroad president.
Jim jined the navy years ago. He's sailin' on the sea.
The children are all scattered, so it's lonesome here for me.
Hat and her man comes down and makes an over-Sunday stay
Sometimes, but 'taint no visit, 'cause they hurry right away.
I got right smart uv comfort from my Bible till the squint
From them cattyracks annoyed me so I couldn't see the print.

'Bout all I do these days is sit and let my dim eyes rest
Upon my younguns who have strayed far from the parent nest.
I love 'em all—God bless 'em—my old eyes is failin' fast,
But even in the darkness I will love 'em till the last,
Fer I know that God will want us, and I'm sure that He must be
Waitin', out there in the distance, with some better eyes fer me.
And when we all get together, up there, far away from harm,
We will make a purtier picter than we made on Sheldon's farm!

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